

# The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council  
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## WEEKLY HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY CROP REPORT May 15, 2019

**MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA** – *Eric Stafne*: Light volumes of Southern Highbush are being harvested now. From Thursday afternoon to Sunday morning last week some areas reported 12-13 inches of rain. Reports of splitting in Suziblue but only slight amounts in others. We are still looking at late May for Rabbiteye harvest to commence. Temperatures are forecasted to rise into the low 90's next week.

**GEORGIA** – *Alex Cornelius*: Overall picking conditions for Georgia have been really good. We had a couple cloudy days this week and between Friday and Sunday different parts of Georgia received a half inch up to as much as 2 inches of rain. This was a much-needed rain. Georgia's highbush volume has slowed down considerably since the end of last week; with most people finishing up the main highbush varieties and now working on Legacy. There will be a slow down of volume this weekend thru the first part of next week while we wait for the Rabbiteye to start coming in heavier. The Rabbiteye crop seems to be coming in lighter than originally anticipated, especially on the earlier varieties. Brightwell has a good crop but not as large as originally forecasted. Alapaha, Vernon, and Premier are starting to be hand harvested and even an occasional machine is running. Georgia will be slow to start up with Rabbiteye volumes for the next 10 days. Brightwell volumes will be ramping up in approximately three weeks. The USDA is reporting 18,550,000 pounds of conventional and 1,140,000 pounds of organic for a total of 19,690,000 pounds shipped so far this season.

**FLORIDA** – *Ken Patterson*: Florida is still picking small amounts in some areas but harvest in Florida should come to a close by the end of the week. The USDA reported That Florida has shipped 21,940,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 680,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries for a total of 22,620,000 pounds this season so far.

**NORTH CAROLINA** – *Neil Moore*: North Carolina weather has been unseasonably cool the past few mornings; temperatures were in the upper 40's this morning. Rain this past weekend across the blueberry production areas in Southeastern North Carolina has provided timely soil moisture for a rapidly ripening crop. The warmer than normal last two weeks has all early varieties being harvested now and we are already seeing blue fruit on mid-season highbush varieties. The crop seems to be moving ahead of a normal schedule. Labor has been short to this point; more labor is arriving daily. Demand is good and quality is excellent.

**NEW JERSEY** – *Denny Doyle*: Bees will be starting to be pulled from the fields by the end of this week. Growers are reporting that the New Jersey crop looks average this year, with an estimated start time around June 15th. Most of the growers reporting that they are pleased with the pollination.

*Blueberries*

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

1847 Iron Point Rd., Suite 100, Folsom, California 95630-8837 • (916) 983-2279  
Fax (916) 983-9370 • E-mail: [info@nabcblues.org](mailto:info@nabcblues.org) • Web Site: [www.nabcblues.org](http://www.nabcblues.org)

**INDIANA** – *Pat Goin*: Weather over the past week was cool and wet. All varieties are in bloom. Field conditions are wet making work difficult. There are some fields still flooded. It appears that we may finally get a stretch of a few days of warmer, drier weather and that should be good for pollination.

**MICHIGAN** – *Dave Trink*: Warmer weather has finally arrived. Soil conditions remain wet and rain is forecast for Thursday evening. Bees are moving into fields during the next few days as early varieties come into bloom. Our growing degree day totals remain 5-7 days behind last year.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA** – *Anju Gill*: The weather has been drier than normal for the last week or so, last few days were cooler with light rain yesterday. Disease pressure has been low, but the forecasted cool & wet weather conditions will necessitate fungicides for Botrytis control through the latter part of bloom. Second application of fertilizer is underway. The weather conditions are quite similar to last year with hot, dry weather repeats during bloom, causing concern whether bees can keep up and get crop adequately pollinated. However, bees are active and so far, pollination is looking good. We are well past full bloom in Duke in some regions and fruit is sizing up. Later varieties are in full bloom. Harvesting is likely to begin around early to mid July.

**WASHINGTON** – *Alan Schreiber*: Due to recent warm weather, bloom in Washington blueberries has advanced very rapidly, early varieties such as Duke have set fruit in the warmer regions of the state. Later varieties are in full bloom. Cooler weather over the next week will slow down the rapid pace of plant development. Growers are making fungicide applications primarily targeting botrytis. The past two weeks have been excellent for pollination and very every indication the crop in Washington ranges from good to excellent.

**OREGON** – *Doug Krahmer*: Our weather has turned cooler and wetter, but we had about 2 weeks of great weather to pollinate. Some growers are starting to remove bees although there is plenty of bloom left on late season varieties. Lots of fungicides going on with the downturn of the weather but disease seems minimal at this time. Timing looks very similar to last year.

**CALIFORNIA** – *Todd Sanders*: As the California Blueberry season continues to slowly progress, the quality continues to be excellent. The season is still progressing at a slower rate than normal and the estimates are that we are roughly 10 days behind normal. The weather this week is expected to be cooler than normal with the chance of rain which could slow the harvest even more. Currently, California estimates that peak harvest should be in the beginning of June. The USDA reported California shipped 2,100,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 8,250,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

**MEXICO** – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 64,910,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

**CHILE** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 100,650,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Chile.

**ARGENTINA** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 19,140,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Argentina.

**PERU** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 67,660,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Peru.

**URUGUAY** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 1,500,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Uruguay.

**GUATEMALA** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through May 15, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala